

II. AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

- THE SPECIFICATION OF THE PATENT IS HEREBY AMENDED AS SET FORTH BELOW:

[0017] The invention therefore provides a ternary alloy of silver, copper and germanium containing from more than 93.5 wt % to 95.5 wt % Ag, from 0.5 to 3 wt % Ge, 1-40 ppm of B, optionally 0.5 wt % of any of Zn, Cd and Sn, optionally 0.1-1 wt % Si and the remainder, apart from incidental ingredients, impurities and grain refiner, copper, wherein the weight ratio of Cu to Ge is from 4:1 to 3:1.

[0018] A typical alloy that has been found to be suitable contains about 94.5 wt % Ag, about 4.3 wt % Cu and about 1.2 wt % Ge. In the above alloy the weight ratio of Cu to Ge is about 3.6:1 whereas in the existing 925 grade Argentium the ratio can be from 5.8:1 (1.1 wt % Ge) to 4.8:1 (1.3 wt % Ge). The applicants consider that it is the reduction in the Cu:Ge weight ratio that is responsible for the reduced thermal processing problems, the CuGe eutectic either not forming or forming in a significantly reduced amount during post-melt thermal processing. In particular the ratio is preferably from 4:1 to 3:1, more preferably about 3.5:1. Above 4:1 the alloy is more likely to exhibit firestain, whereas below 3:1 the high germanium content gives rise to formability problems.